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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9837
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JCS WASHDC
RUEOEHA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PN
RUEKJCS/DSAA WASHDC
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 00896

E.O. 12356: DECL: 1/20/94
TAGS: MASS, MO, US, OREP
SUBJECT: STAFFDEL PENA REPORT ON US MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TO HONDURAS

REFS: A. TEGUCIGALPA 11958, B. TEGUCIGALPA 13209

1. C-ENTIRE TEXT.
2. STAFFDEL PENA'S REPORT TO CHAIRMAN ZABLOCKI IS GENERALLY FAVORABLE TO INCREASED US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS, BUT DOES SUGGEST THAT THERE MAY BE A PROBLEM WITH THE CAPABILITY OF THE HONDURAN ARMED FORCES TO ABSORB INCREASED LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE. DURING STAFFDEL PENA'S LATE OCTOBER VISIT, THE EMBASSY WAS STUDYING THE PROPOSAL WHICH THE HONDURANS HAD PRESENTED TO THE KISSINGER COMMISSION WHICH REQUESTED SHARPLY INCREASED LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE. THE EMBASSY'S CONCLUSION (REFTEL A) WAS THAT THE HONDURAN ARMED FORCE'S NEEDS WERE SO GREAT THAT LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE COULD BE INCREASED SHARPLY WITHOUT ENCOUNTERING ABSORPTION PROBLEMS, GENERALLY BECAUSE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CONCENTRATED ON UNSOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT, AMMUNITION STOCKS, SPARE PARTS AND TRAINING.
3. THE MOST SOPHISTICATED ITEM WHICH THE HAF IS LIKELY TO ACQUIRE OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS WOULD BE THE F-5E, AS A REPLACEMENT FOR THE AGING SUPER MYSTERES. THE F-5S WOULD GO TO THE MOST TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED BRANCH OF THE ARMED FORCES. THE HONDURAN AIR FORCE COMMANDER, GENERAL LOPEZ, IS CONFIDENT THAT THE F-5S COULD BE ABSORBED WITH A MINIMUM OF COMPLICATIONS. LOPEZ TOLD A VISITING TACTICAL AIR EXPERT THAT HE WOULD PREPARE FOR THE F-5S IN THE SAME MANNER IN WHICH THE HONDURAN AIR FORCE ABSORBED THE SUPER MYSTERE. HE WOULD SEND HIS BEST MECHANICS TO LEARN THE NEW SYSTEM. WITH THE HELP OF THE NORTHROP TECHNICAL SUPPORT PACKAGE (A NORMAL PROCEDURE) THE F-5 WOULD ENTER THE HONDURAN INVENTORY SMOOTHLY. IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THE HONDURAN PILOTS COULD TRANSITION TO THE F-5 WITHOUT GREAT PROBLEMS.
4. WE DO NOT SUGGEST THAT THE HONDURAN FORCE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM WILL BE WITHOUT ABSORPTION PROBLEMS, BUT THE LEVEL OF THE TECHNOLOGY TO BE

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TRANSFERRED GENERALLY IS LOW, EXCEPT FOR AIRCRAFT. THE
HONDURAN ARMED FORCES ARE WELL AWARE THAT FORCE
MODERNIZATION PRESENTS A CHALLENGE, BUT AS THE HAF
LOGISTICS CHIEF HAS SAID, "IN THE FACE OF THE
NICARAGUAN THREAT WE HAVE NO CHOICE."

5. THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PASS A COPY OF THIS
MESSAGE TO HOUSE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

NEGROPONTE

END OF MESSAGE

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